Done for Three Years — Precipitation 'Heavier'

Rain-Making Works, BCPC Hints

B.C. Power Commission has given a guarded indication it believes its rain-making program on Vancouver Island is worthwhile.

April issue of the BCPC magazine Power asks if the program has been effective, and answers itself: "About all that can be said is that precipitation in the test area has been measurably heavier than normal during the three years the program has been in operation."

It says that if weather modification programs could increase precipitation by 10 per cent, the resulting increase in power produced by the John Hart plant would be worth more than $1,000,000.

The magazine says the commission has a regular cloud-seeding program in Central Vancouver Island with 14 generators, mostly on the western slope of the mountain ridge, and the contract for the program has another two years to run. It has been in effect three years.

It says "it is difficult to say with certainty" if the program had any effect on last summer's drought — "Cloud-seeding to be effective requires clouds, and there were few clouds in the area."

Easter Bunny's Helpers

Decorating hundreds of Easter eggs at a Yates Street candy shop, in readiness for the weekend holiday, are Kathleen Sims, right, and Mrs. Mildred Deans.—(Colonist photo)

Bunnies Will Be At Park

The Easter bunnies will be in Beacon Hill Park all right at the Easter weekend, parks administrator W. H. Warren said yesterday.

He said a doe and a number of young rabbits will be exhibited in the birdcage at the park.

And he said, another Easter feature has already been introduced: in the deer pen, there are a ewe and a couple of lambs.

Curfew Bell May Reach Gorge Park

Public works committee of the city council changed its mind yesterday and decided to recommend allowing an old city hall curfew and fire alarm bell to be used as a historic exhibit at Kinsmen Gorge Park.

The committee had previously refused a request for the bell, holding that it should be used in the city. But members said yesterday they had not understood that the Gorge Park, developed partly as a Greater Victoria centennial project, was the proposed location.

'What Big Teeth!'

Thunderbird Park totem pole catches attention of two visiting California children. Grade 6 pupils, Janyce Hinckley, 11, of Grant School, and Marty Van Zandt, 11, of Washington School, were among 42 students from Eureka City, Calif., who arrived here yesterday for a three-day visit. Today, they will attend Greater Victoria schools and Thursday they will go sightseeing.—(Colonist photo)

Civic Leaders Say:

Don't Let BCE Drop Payments

★ ★ ★

Bus Franchise Must Be Paid

★ ★ ★

Civic leaders in Victoria and the Vancouver areas expressed solid opposition last night to a suggestion the B.C. Electric Co. stop paying municipal franchise payments for operating its bus services.

Officials in Victoria, Oak Bay, Esquimalt, Saanich and mainland centres served by the company said the franchise taxes are only "just compensation" for the use of municipal roads.

In Greater Victoria, the franchise tax elimination proposal from BCE president A. E. Grauer at an annual meeting of the B.C. Power Corporation, yesterday, raised fears this area was threatened with a boost in fares and/or curtailment of service.

FEARS FED

The fears were fed by the fact the BCE president at the power commission meeting had stated that the fare differential between Vancouver and Victoria "has become increasingly hard to justify."

(Present city fares are 13 cents in Victoria, 15 cents in Vancouver.)

Dr. H. L. Purdy, executive vice-president of the BCE, said in Vancouver last night the company had no plans for a fare increase in Victoria, however.

But the transit system in Greater Victoria is continuing to pile up excessive losses, he said, and "we shall have to seek further economies in service, such as we have had to do in Vancouver."

A more serious transit deficit was encountered in Victoria (about $470,000 in 1958) than in Vancouver, BCE president Grauer said, because Victoria fares have remained lower than Vancouver fares while the wage rates have become the same in both cities.

SUSIDY IN ORDER

He hinted that a subsidy would be in order, but called for elimination of franchise taxes, which in 1958 amounted to $648,353 for the whole system.

Reeve A. C. Würtele of Esquimalt disagreed last night with a franchise tax removal.

"They have a monopoly: that's the price they pay for it," he said. "What we want to know is why the B.C. Electric bus system is running in the red."

He suggested that a "station-wagon type of vehicle—Austin, maybe" might be used on a 20-minute, belt-line service along Head, Colville, Admirals and Munro, connecting at central points with large buses from the city.

"With the present 40-minute service," he said, "naturally people won't use the buses all the time."

"Any fool can see they'd be losing money" with the present system, he said. The running of three buses from the city to Esquimalt in off-hours could be cut to one bus in off-hours to run from the city to dockyard and back, connecting with the feeder service along the route, he suggested.

Mayor Percy Scurrah opposed elimination of the franchise tax and agreed with Reeve Wurtele that smaller buses could be used for certain runs.

The franchise tax is "only peanuts" when compared with the over-all BCE annual transit system deficit," he said. "It's such a small amount . . . it wouldn't really alleviate the situation, would it?"

ANOTHER SUBSIDY

Elimination of the tax would be just another form of a subsidy, he said. "If you are going to subsidize something, you want to be sure it is being operated with maximum efficiency and economy.

"All in all, I'm not just satisfied that the B.C. Electric has explored all the avenues of economy," the mayor said. Lighter buses of a European type, like Volkswagens, that could carry about 12 passengers could be run cheaper on some of the routes that are now unprofitable, he said.

Reeve George Murdoch of Oak Bay strongly opposed a subsidy and elimination of franchise tax.

He endorsed a feeder bus system. Large buses could be run to the Oak Bay shopping centre to connect with feeder buses from the Gonzales Bay area, Uplands and the Willows area, he said.

Mr. Murdoch believed an increase in fares would not solve the problem. When the first bus fare increase was sought several years ago, Oak Bay council pointed out that it felt that if fares were increased fewer people would be riding and the company would be no better off, he said.

People wouldn't mind paying a dime to ride a short distance, he said, "but they won't pay 13 cents (the present rate)."

"I think someone could take over that bus service and make it pay," Mr. Murdoch said. "If they (B.C. Electric) don't want to cooperate, then let them turn the business over to someone else."

Reeve George Chatterton of Saanich, feared the municipalities and the city alike would suffer if B.C. Electric were allowed to cancel its service.

But he felt a "very thorough investigation" of Victoria's transit system should be made by a "competent, outside traffic expert" before a subsidy, if any, is granted and before any decision is made to cancel the franchise tax.

Hard-Toe Boot Issue Stalls Firemen Talks

For want of a free issue of safety boots to city firemen, negotiations between Oak Bay council and its own firemen have been stalled.

Both city and Oak Bay firemen are seeking a boot allowance, but Oak Bay council's negotiating committee wants to see what city council does about the request from its men.

Meanwhile, Oak Bay council has offered its firemen an additional statutory holiday—Easter Monday—and a salary schedule for first, second, third and fourth class firemen set at $10 a month less than city rates.

The union is considering the offers.

Exam Time Draws Near At College

Spring examination time is drawing close for about 800 students at Victoria College.

The examinations will begin April 14 in some education courses, April 17 for the rest of the students, and will be over April 30.

Administration a Hitch

Master Plan Fine —But Not Quite

The Capital Region Planning Board's master plan for future physical development of Greater Victoria and Saanich Peninsula is fine except for its administration, city council public works committee decided yesterday.

The committee endorsed the plan in principle, but recommended to city council that an attempt be made to have the legislation governing its administration changed.

If two-thirds of the member-municipalities of the board adopt the plan, it will become "official" and none of the municipalities can make a zoning change in conflict with it.

"We would lose our autonomy," said Ald. Geoffrey Edgelow. "But possibly it could be worked out."

Will You Put Up A Queen Scout?

More billets are needed for Queens Scouts coming to Victoria from other B.C. communities for the Queen's Scouts' fourth annual provincial ceremony, April 1, 2 and 3.

Scout officials said yesterday 50 Victoria families had volunteered to look after visiting scouts, but that 56 more billets were urgently needed.

Families willing to act as hosts are asked to contact scout headquarters at EV 2-3915 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

The hosts are being asked to pick up visiting scouts at Thunderbird Park gathering place at 5 p.m., April 1. The visitors will leave at 9 a.m., April 3.

Scout officials said overnight accommodation April 1 and 2 is required for the visitors plus supper April 1 and breakfast April 2 and 3.

Estimates Next Week

City council public works committee will start work on 1959 budget estimates next Wednesday at 9 a.m., trying to get the whole job done by evening.

Water Bills

Refuse Bid For Office Council Told

Rejection of an Esquimalt council request that a sub-office for payment of water bills be provided in that municipality was recommended yesterday to city council by public works committee.

Esquimalt residents pay their water bills at city hall, or on Saturdays can pay them at a drugstore across the road from city hall.

"If we were going to do it for Esquimalt, we would have to do it all over the city," said Ald. Geoffrey Edgelow. Besides, he said, Esquimalt residents shouldn't be encouraged not to come into town.

James George Tory Choice

James A. A. George was chosen last night as Oak Bay Progressive Conservative candidate in the next provincial election.

The investment counsellor and lifelong Tory defeated the only other nominee, William Nelles, 58 votes to 11.

After his victory, Mr. George congratulated the 30-year-old naval veteran for "having the courage to get up here and show the people of Greater Victoria that the Oak Bay Conservatives are interested enough to have more than one nominee."

Mr. George told more than 100 persons at Willows School that if elected, a provincial Conservative government will:

1. Repeal the so-called Tax Equalization Act.
2. Act on the problem of chronic illness.
3. Have an audit made of the provincial books and present to the people a true picture of their finances.
4. Make a complete public examination of any Wenner-Gren agreements with the Social Credit government and cancel anything that is not in the best interests of British Columbia.

With the Conservatives in office "you can go to sleep at night knowing that when you awake it will not be to find that part of our province has been given away," he said.

"If we have to hand over this strategic area (Rocky Mountain Trench) to anyone, and I doubt that we do, let us hand it over to a Canadian."

Mr. George's campaign manager will be Lt.-Cmdr. William Gage.

$24 In U.S. Bills

Twenty-four dollars in American bills were found loose on sidewalk in the downtown district yesterday. The owner can claim the money by calling in at the city police station.

JOSEPH MICHAELIS

★ ★ ★

Seen In Passing

Joseph Michaelis looking at an Easter bonnet. (He is manager of the St. Vincent de Paul Society centre on Johnson Street, a job he has been handling for seven years. A former Saskatchewan wheat farmer, he was reeve of Willow Bunch, Sask., for 15 consecutive years before retiring to Victoria in 1946. He and his wife **Bertha** have a married daughter, **Anne**, living in Regina. His hobby is gardening) . . . **Maureen McCormick** talking about street name posts . . . **Howard Burke** looking at pictures of himself . . . **Dave Nightingale** explaining what sizes of film are most popular . . . **Mines Minister Ken Kiernan** having a busy time . . . **Mal Sutherland** selling a roll of black and white film and trying hard to sell a roll of color film as well . . . **Bob Macmillan** driving about town with his huge German shepherd dog, **Toffy** . . . **Ira Hill** and **Peter Brown** back at work after holidays in Mexico . . . **Bill Hughes** talking to entrants in the Miss Victoria contest.

Teen-Agers Worldly

Keeping It Fun Keeps the Young Scouters Told

Greater Victoria scouters were warned last night to "keep the fun in scouting" or they would not be able to keep the present-day "sophisticated" teenager interested in the movement.

★ ★ ★

Leaders have to compete with "the distractions of the day," radio, television and big-city life, said Brig. William G. H. Roaf, Vancouver, the new provincial commissioner.

"Boys of today are more sophisticated than they were 15 years ago, but they can still be made better citizens through scouting and an interest in the outdoors," he said.

At the B.C. Scouts Association, Victoria District, quarterly meeting, Brig. Roaf advised leaders to "show them the skills of the outdoors and give them lots to do."

He presented certificates to six leaders who succesfully completed a district commissioners' course. They are W. H. Gibson, F. C. Nelson, G. W. Oliphant, Donald Hamer, D. F. Mason and district president R. L. V. Jermain.

BRIG. W. G. H. ROAF
. . . lots to do

Saanich Ponders Idea

Expansion Possible For Health Centre

A decision to install a $6,000 drainage and treatment sewer plant for Saanich Memorial Health Centre has started Saanich council thinking about expanding the centre, Reeve George Chatterton said last night.

The projected plant will be more than adequate to handle refuse from the hospital in its present size, he said. It could handle an increase of 16 more beds, making 46 in all.

The centre, the only one of its kind which is owned by a municipality in Greater Victoria, takes care of indigent, elderly persons afflicted with chronic illnesses.

$4,785 Grant to City Approved by Cabinet

A grant of $4,785 to Victoria for highway maintenance within the city was approved yesterday in a provincial order-in-council. The grant is made on the basis of $1,500 a mile.

Grants of $23,625 to Vancouver and $14,182 to New Westminster were also approved.

Freedom's Voice Stronger Because of Colonist Ad

The voice of freedom should sound stronger for one resident of the newly-independent nation of Ghana in Africa thanks to a Victoria firm and an advertisement in The Daily Colonist.

Theosphilus Mansah, Jr., of Cape Coast in Ghana wrote the Victoria branch of R. O. Munson and Company after reading, he said, a company ad in the Colonist about "glasses which enable one to hear properly."

He said he had suffered from poor hearing from birth and would like details and price on the glasses.

Company spokesmen said the "hearing glasses" had been sent to the Ghana customer after an exchange of several letters.